



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good morning,

Congratulations to the City of Glendale for hosting one of the biggest events in the wrestling world, WWE's WrestleMania XXVI! This spectacular event welcomed more than 72,000 fans from the farthest corners of the globe as well as from our own backyard. The estimated economic impact of the event is nearly \$50 million! The *Arizona Republic* stated that "the event was the best-attended, highest-grossing event in the history of the University of Phoenix Stadium."

Congratulations also goes out to the WrestleMania Host Committee who did an extraordinary job planning and assisting Glendale with hosting this incredible event. Opportunities to host events such as WrestleMania, the Super Bowl, the WasteManagement Open, the Accenture Match Play Championship, the Fiesta Bowl and the BCS National Championship Game are extraordinarily beneficial. The thousands of visitors who travel to the state because of these events generate tourism dollars and contribute to local economies as they travel throughout Arizona. We look forward to future opportunities to supporting these and other great events!

And if the ultimate wrestling smackdown was just a bit too much for you, the softer side of Arizona is in full bloom and promises not to put you in a headlock...

The desert is never more beautiful than when it's in bloom! Spring is here and that means the vibrant colors of Arizona's wildflowers are out for both residents and visitors to enjoy. If you're expecting any visitors during this time, please remind them that March and April are the ideal months to view the variety of wildflowers that decorate the desert landscape. This is also a great time to experience some of our state's exhilarating outdoor adventures such as hiking, biking, mountain climbing, or just relaxing and taking in the scenic views.

If you are looking for information about the blooming wildflowers, visit www.azstateparks.com or www.dbg.org/wildflower. For ideas on what to see and do around the entire state, visit www.arizonaguide.com.

Have a great week!

AOT News

Last Chance to Participate in the ATU Social Media Workshop!

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present the next series of highly-informative Arizona Tourism University workshops. This complimentary workshop series, titled **First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap**, will begin in March. Webinar – presentation delivered right to your desktop!

The workshop will be presented by Jay Baer, one of the world's most popular social media consultants and bloggers. He is the creator of the *7-step Social Media Strategic Planning Process* and the *Twitter 20* series of live Twitter interviews. An online marketing pioneer, he has worked with more than 700 companies - and 25 of the Fortune 1000 - since 1994.

Be sure to sign up today by sending your RSVP to ATURSVP@azot.gov.

First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap complimentary webinar will be held **Friday, April 9** from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

To register, send your contact information to ATURSVP@azot.gov.

AOT Now Accepting Nominations for Governor's Tourism Awards!

The Arizona Office of Tourism and our partners are busy coordinating plans for the next annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, July 12-14, at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. The conference is the premier event for members of the travel industry to participate in dynamic work sessions and listen to informative guest speakers.

In addition to the conference, AOT coordinates the **Governor's Tourism Awards**, honoring individuals and organizations that have contributed noteworthy achievements over the past year to the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that have helped make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

AOT invites you to review the 2010 award categories and guidelines and submit nominations of individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the tourism industry. The winners will be awarded at the Governor's Tourism Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, July 13. All submissions must be received by **April 16, 2010**. Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms.

Look for future editions of **AOT in Action** for Governor's Conference on Tourism registration information!

Upcoming Events & Activities

French Tour Operator Road Show

Date: April – May

Location: Lille, Toulouse and Nantes

Japanese Receptive Operator Sales Mission (Las Vegas)

Date: April 17

Location: Las Vegas, NV

AAA/CAA FAM Tour

Date: April 28 – May 2

Location: Glendale, Greater Phoenix Area, Grand Canyon and Wickenburg

Industry News

SAVE the DATE: Arizona Highways Travel Show – May 22 & 23

The Arizona Highways Travel Show provides an opportunity for communities, along with industry-related organizations and companies to promote their tourism destinations directly to potential customers in the Phoenix market.

The Arizona Highways Travel Show had an extremely successful inaugural show last year and looks to build upon that success. More than 100 exhibitors participated in last year's event where more than 3,000 attendees were looking for travel locations and things to do in the summer and fall in Arizona.

Show Details:

Arizona Highways Travel Show

Phoenix Convention Center – Hall F

May 22 & 23, 2010

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

To register for a booth at the show:

www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com

Booth prices start at: \$650.00 – *opportunities to share a booth are available*

Rich Ripley

Arizona Highways Travel Show

Presented by KTVK - 3TV

480-838-9123

rich@azinco.com
www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com

Glendale Hotels see Boost in Occupancy

Smith Travel Research reports a 12.2 percent increase in occupancy rates at Glendale hotels in January compared to the same month last year.

Meanwhile, the average daily rate on rooms dropped from \$137.57 in January 2009 to \$119.31 this year, a decline of about 13 percent. Despite that, revenue per available room, another key metric, remained more stable at \$64.37, a decline of about 2.6 percent over the same period.

In February, occupancy increased even further to 60.8 percent and RevPar increased to \$69.67. ADR dropped in February to \$114.59.

Meanwhile, March's spring training games, a much-touted Paul McCartney concert and Wrestlemania have officials hopeful that tourism numbers will remain strong.

Scottsdale showed similar increases with January occupancy of 65.9 percent, an increase of 11.8 percent over 2009. Average daily rate dropped in year-over-year figures to \$162.15, a 15.5 percent decline, and RevPar declined 5.5 percent to \$106.91. Scottsdale's February numbers show a 10 percent year-over-year increase in occupancy to 72.9 percent, an ADR decline of 12.9 percent to \$171.96 and a 3.6 percent decline in RevPar to \$125.32. (*Phoenix Business Journal, March 24*)

2009 International Visits Down Five Percent

The Department of Commerce said 54.9 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in 2009, a decrease of 5 percent from 2008. In 2009, the top inbound markets continued to be Canada and Mexico, both of which were down in arrivals along with six of the nine overseas regional markets. South America, Asia and Oceania experienced the strongest growth in the fourth quarter, due in part to increases from the emerging markets of China and Brazil. In the month of December, total visitation reached 4.1 million, an increase of 5 percent over December 2008. That marked the third straight month of increased travel to the U.S. During the fourth quarter, total arrivals increased 2 percent. That marked the first quarter to experience growth in 2009.

International visitors spent \$121.1 billion in 2009, down nearly 15 percent from 2008, the largest single year decline in spending for visitors to the U.S. Canadian visitation totaled 18.0 million, down 5 percent for the year, but up 9 percent in December. Mexican arrivals totaled 13.2 million, down 4 percent for the year. Overseas arrivals were down 6 percent from 2008. (*Special to TA; Travel Advance, March 25*)

WTTC, U.S. Travel to Share Resources

The World Travel & Tourism Council and the U.S. Travel Association have signed a memorandum of understanding, formally agreeing to share resources and to work closely together to promote the industry's interests. "With so many issues affecting both WTTC and U.S. Travel, I am pleased that our two organizations, which share several of the same industry leaders as members, will work more co-operatively in sharing communications and research, as well as engaging more

closely on future emergency preparedness issues to minimize the impact of future crises on travel and tourism," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of U.S. Travel. "In addition to exchanging travel and tourism market data and information on marketing, e-commerce, emergency preparedness and sustainability, we will co-operate on developing a strategic plan to identify mutually agreeable industry advocacy platform positions," said Jean-Claude Baumgarten, WTTC president and CEO. (www.TravelPulse.com; *Travel Advance*, March 25)

Restaurants See Signs of Spring

Shoots of optimism are emerging in the high-end restaurant world, says The Wall Street Journal. Expense-account spending is trickling back and consumers are starting to shell out for luxuries again. Prices for some specialty ingredients have come down. And good weather conditions in many parts of the country are making for the best crop in years of wild mushrooms, strawberries and asparagus. The combination is cheering restaurateurs, who are rolling out festive baby-lamb roasts, multi-course shad dinners and dishes laden with wild mushrooms to celebrate the season. For chefs, it's a welcome change from last spring, when many restaurants weathered the worst of the economic storm by promoting discounts, comfort food, cheaper drinks and bar snacks.

"Last year we were in a freefall at this time of year. Now we're in recovery," says Daniel Scherotter, chef and owner of Palio d'Asti, in San Francisco's financial district. But like the economic recovery overall, the restaurant rebound is spotty and uncertain. (www.TravelPulse.com; *Travel Advance*, March 26)

Study Finds Expo Industry Suffers Significant Decline

The exhibition industry overall suffered a 12.5 percent decline in 2009, the Center for Exhibition Industry Research announced this week, stating that "the Great Recession has taken an historic toll on the U.S. exhibition industry." The final 2009 CEIR Index report shows that last year's loss is four times greater than the largest previous loss, which was 3.1 percent in 2008. "The length, depth and reach of this recession made resistance impossible," said CEIR President and CEO Douglas L. Ducate. "The concern today is not for what happened in 2008 and 2009, but what the outlook is for the industry over the next several years and what organizers can do to strengthen their events." Although all four CEIR Index metrics of measurement-net square feet, revenue, professional attendance and number of exhibiting companies-saw declines in the fourth quarter of 2009, those declines were less severe than in past quarters, according to CEIR, suggesting the start of a modest recovery. (www.MiMegasite.com, 3/23; *Travel Advance*, March 26)

Fort Verde State Historic Park Granted Reprieve from Closing on March 19

Arizona State Parks and the Town of Camp Verde announced today that Fort Verde State Historic Park will not close as planned on March 29, 2010. Camp Verde Mayor Bob Burnside has agreed to provide funding from the Town of Camp Verde and Yavapai County for State Parks to keep the park open and operating for one year.

"We have signed the Intergovernmental Agreement to keep the park open another year with options for two additional one-year periods," said State Parks Executive Director Reneé Bahl.

According to Mayor Burnside, "We are committed to promoting this park which will bring visitors to Camp Verde even during the economic recession. Fort Verde is the focus of our

tourism efforts to draw visitors to the downtown area. We also want to attract as many local volunteers as possible to get involved at the Fort with many new special events and activities. Already there are more than 50 volunteers working with Fort Verde, but we'll need everyone's support if we are going to keep the park open on the usual five-day schedule."

"Our Yavapai County Supervisors have been extremely supportive in partnering with us to keep the park open and we all appreciate the work that Supervisor Chip Davis has done to find funds to help on this effort," said Burnside.

"The Camp Verde Historical Society has been our partner for many years and has supported efforts to keep this State Park operating," said Bahl. "Arizona should appreciate the work this Historical Society has done to win the battle to save Fort Verde. This is the only State Park which offers a glimpse into the history of Arizona's frontier soldier's everyday life in the late 1800's and the best-preserved example of this period in Arizona's military history." (*Arizona State Parks, March 26*)

Santa Cruz County Will Operate Tubac Presidio State Historic Park

Arizona State Parks and Santa Cruz County announced today that Tubac Presidio State Historic Park will not close as planned on Monday, March 29. Executive Director Renee Bahl and County Manager Greg Lucero have come to an agreement that the County will be able to take over the management of the park.

"We are finalizing the Intergovernmental Agreement to keep the State Park open for at least another year," said Bahl. "Our County Supervisors were extremely supportive of keeping this park operating and they will ratify their commitment to keep Arizona's first State Park open with this Agreement," said Lucero.

"Through this process we have witnessed something truly remarkable. Our County Supervisors, State Parks, and the community of Tubac worked collaboratively to save Arizona's treasure, the place where Arizona started. We have much to celebrate today," said Shaw Kinsley, President of the Tubac Historical Society.

The Park will continue operations on Monday as usual with the five-day 9-5:00 pm schedule. (closed Tues/Wed.) Ultimately the County will be responsible for the operation of the Park and the exhibits that were recently renovated at the Park will not have to be moved. "We expect this to be a seamless transition that will not affect the flow of tourism into the community," said Lucero.

"We are thankful that the Tubac Historical Society has worked so diligently to bring this partnership to fruition," said Bahl. "It is a great day that we can say that the State Park which interprets the Piman community and Spanish colonization of the 1700's will be available for all to see and will continue to draw visitors to the area from around the world." (*Arizona State Parks, March 26*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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